



ANNUAL REPORT

OF

DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

305 W. EIGHTH STREET

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE



FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

JULY 1, 1953 TO JUNE 30, 1954

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	I
Commission Members, Meetings, Etc.	II
Definition of Blindness	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	1
Business Enterprises Program	3
Aid to the Blind Program	3
Home Instruction	5
Social Service	5
Ophthalmological Services	5
Education—Nursery School	6
Primary, Secondary and Advanced	7
Recreation	7
Camp Landis	8
Workshop and Training Center	9
Display Room	10
Library	11
Miscellaneous Services	12
Clearing House	12
Registration of Solicitors	12
State Use Bill	12
Financial Report	13

FOREWORD

The Delaware Commission for the Blind, established by act of the State Legislature in 1909, was the outgrowth of the Delaware Committee for the Blind, organized in 1908 by C. Reginald Van Trump, a civic-minded philanthropist who had himself lost his sight in his middle thirties. Funds raised enabled the Commission to acquire title to buildings and equipment necessary to the setting up of a workshop for employable blind. This establishment, at 305-307 W. Eighth Street, Wilmington, Delaware, is still the headquarters of the Commission, the original building now being used for office purposes, the craft work and vocational training courses now being carried on in an annex erected in 1917.

From its humble beginning, the Commission operated the small workshop and sent a home teacher into the homes of adult blind people to aid them in their adjustment, teach them braille and crafts, and, in general, lighten for them the burden of blindness. Today the services of the Commission have been greatly expanded under the terms of the original statute which provides for the "education, training and general welfare" of the blind of the State of Delaware.

THE DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

MEMBERS	RESIDENCE
Mrs. Jessie C. Wilson, <i>Chairman</i>	Dover
Mrs. Irence duPont, <i>Honorary Chairman</i>	Granogue
J. Francis Blaine, <i>Secy. & Asst. Treas.</i>	Wilmington
Herbert B. Mearns, <i>Treasurer</i>	Wilmington
Emil R. Mayerberg, M.D.	Westover Hills
Mrs. J. Caleb Wright	Georgetown
Francis J. Cummings, Ph.D., <i>Exec. Secy.</i>	Carrcroft

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Regular Commission meetings are held monthly with the exception of the summer months of June, July, August and September. Special meetings are held whenever called. The annual meeting, during which officers are elected, is held in October. Meetings are held at the Commission headquarters unless otherwise specified.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

305 W. Eighth Street, Wilmington, Delaware

F. J. CUMMINGS, Ph.D., *Executive Secretary*

DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS

"Blind person" means one who is totally blind or has visual acuity of not more than 20/200 in the better eye with correction or whose vision is limited in field so that the widest diameter subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.



The man shown is operating a hair drying machine at a local leather company.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Delaware Commission for the Blind operates a vocational rehabilitation program designed to provide physical restoration, training and placement of blind citizens of Delaware in accordance with their aptitudes, interests and abilities. Any services which enable blind persons to become employable or increase their employability are provided as part of the total vocational rehabilitation process. Vocational rehabilitation, as illustrated by a rehabilitated housewife, may not always mean remunerative employment; however, in this and other instances, it enables the client to assume as nearly as possible her normal responsibilities.

During the past fiscal year this department provided training, including maintenance and transportation where necessary, for 29 persons. Physical restoration services, including complete medical and ophthalmological examinations, prosthetic appliances, surgery and treatment were provided 60 persons. During the past fiscal year 24 clients were successfully rehabilitated into employment with total earnings of \$35,594.00. A sub-division of the types of employment is as follows:

9 Clients placed in competitive industrial employment	\$24,300.00
---	-------------

(This type of employment is illustrated in the photographs.)

*2 Clients placed in vending stand employment	3,600.00
5 Clients placed in workshop employment	4,478.00
4 Clients placed in self-employment	3,216.00
4 Clients rehabilitated as housewives	

Some training programs sponsored by this agency extend for a longer period than one year, and many clients now receiving training and other rehabilitation services will be placed in remunerative employment during the present year.

In computing the total effect of the vocational rehabilitation program it is significant to note that the figures quoted above indicate only those persons rehabilitated during fiscal 1954. In addition, it is the responsibility of the vocational rehabilitation department to maintain close working relationship with those clients previously employed in competitive fields of endeavor. An approximate calculation of the total annual earnings of these blind clients previously rehabilitated is \$73,000. This plus \$35,594.00 makes a total of \$108,594 taxable income, earned by citizens of Delaware who might otherwise be receiving public assistance.

**For an understanding of the Commission's Business Enterprises Program see page 3.*



Picture shows a blind lady sorting and assembling bottle caps for an industrial concern.



Young blind man successfully operates cafeteria type stand in factory.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

Under the Business Enterprises Program of the Delaware Commission for the Blind, blind men and women are trained to operate vending stands and snack bars in public and private buildings, factories and other suitable locations. The purpose of the program is to provide continuous employment for visually handicapped persons, enabling them to become useful, self-supporting citizens of their community rather than depending upon others for their support. There are fourteen full-time and two part time stands in operation throughout the state. These enterprises employ 14 full-time blind operators, 2 part time blind operators and 19 sighted assistants to help with the food preparation, housekeeping, etc.

Sales for the 14 full-time units for the fiscal year ending 6-30-54 totaled	\$244,096.64
Salaries, bonuses, etc. paid to blind operators	35,840.11
Salaries, bonuses, etc. paid to sighted assistants	29,464.92

AID TO THE BLIND PROGRAM

The Aid to the Blind Program of the State of Delaware is based upon need and is administered by the Delaware Commission for the Blind. To be eligible for financial assistance a client must have no more than 20/200 visual acuity in the better eye with correctly fitted lenses or be suffering from a serious limitation in the visual field, and meet certain other statutory requirements of the Commission, such as age, resi-



This blind operated stand is in a commercial concern.

dence, etc. Grants are made on a budgetary deficiency basis and statutory limitation restricts any single grant to a maximum amount of \$85.00 monthly. Reciprocal agreements are being processed by neighboring states and the State of Delaware waiving residence requirements when clients move from one state to another.

Seventy-two applications for Aid to the Blind were received by the Commission during the past fiscal year as follows:

38	approved
27	rejected
2	withdrawn
5	pending

Fifty-seven cases were closed from the Aid to the Blind rolls of the Commission during the past fiscal year because of such factors as: physical restoration, death, improved vision, moved out of state, receiving support from children or OASI, allotments from servicemen, etc.

Expenditures for direct payments to recipients during the past year were as follows:

\$ 65,000.00	State Funds
86,307.80	Federal Funds
<hr/>	
\$151,307.80	Total

Two hundred and twenty six cases was the average number of recipients per month.

\$55.89 was the average payment per recipient per month.

In June 1954 the Aid to the Blind cases were distributed as follows:

	RECIP- IENTS	TOTAL PAYMENT	AVERAGE PAYMENT
New Castle County	112	\$ 6,770.94	\$60.45
Kent County	44	2,675.90	60.82
Sussex County	62	3,653.03	58.94
Totals	218	\$13,099.87	\$60.09

HOME INSTRUCTION

A comprehensive home teaching program is carried on in all three counties of the state. The program includes the teaching of braille, travel training, housekeeping training, and the use of special appliances for better and more convenient living. Handcrafts, consisting of leatherwork, knitting, crocheting, etc., are taught by the home teachers under this program. A total of 3,802 home visits were made by workers of the Commission during the past year.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The field workers keep a file of suitable nursing homes in their working area. Information is obtained from the Wilmington Housing Authority giving locations for homes in desirable housing areas. Many of our clients moved from undesirable neighborhoods during the past year and are now living in homes conducive to good health and happy living. Several clients entered a church home in Pennsylvania. Contact is maintained with these clients by the Commission so that they will be reassured of our continued interest in their welfare.

The total blind caseload in Delaware for the past fiscal year is as follows:

468	Whites
171	Negroes
1	Nanticoke Indian
<hr/>	
640	Total

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SERVICES

Delaware, being small in size, lends itself well to the solution of community problems on a state wide level. In 1951 the Commission expanded its medical program to include a reporting system on all retrolental fibroplasia cases. Commission field workers contacted the hospitals and doctors in their areas, and, through the efforts of Dr. W. O. LaMotte, Jr., a central reporting clinic for these cases was established. Radio broadcasts, newspaper reports, and other media helped to give our program state wide publicity. The final result of our efforts is a smoothly-working ophthalmological screening clinic for children at the Delaware Hospital, in Wilmington, under the supervision and direction of Dr. LaMotte.

Another prominent ophthalmologist, Dr. Davis G. Durham, screened the entire caseload of the Commission excluding the retrolental fibroplasia cases. The screening began in Sept.,

1953 and continued until June 30, 1954. Recommendations were made on 277 cases based on information obtained from the latest eye report. The Commission's field workers contacted the clients and arranged for their re-examination and transportation. 123 clients reported for examinations at Dr. Durham's private office where clinics were held at two to three week intervals throughout the year. For this invaluable service Dr. Durham made no charge. In the Kent and Sussex County areas Dr. Robert Dickey gave his services when the client preferred to be examined in his own community. Medication and/or surgery followed this examination process whenever indicated.

The statistical outcome of the survey is as follows:

Total caseload	640
Chosen for re-evaluation	277
Re-evaluation not indicated	363
Re-evaluated	123
Cataract surgery recommended	53
Cataract surgery performed	20
Physical restorations from cataract surgery	14
Recommendations for lenses	64
Conditioning lenses	14
Physical restorations from conditioning lenses	4
Telescopic lenses recommended	50
Telescopic lenses procured	35
Medical Treatment	5
Artificial Eye procured	1

EDUCATION

NURSERY SCHOOL

Sunnybrook Nursery School, acquired by lease agreement with the Delaware Anti-Tuberculosis Society in 1950, is a school for blind children of pre-school age. The purpose of the school is to prevent the development in these blind infants of asocial personal habits—poor posture, introversion, unsociability, blindisms, etc., that often result from the blind child's inability to imitate those about him as visually-normal children do. The staff at the school assist the parents of the blind children with their often-baffling task of rearing a visually-handicapped child, and help to smooth the road for the child and for his family so that a wholesome relationship may exist between the two and between both and society. Sunnybrook is not meant to be a substitute for the home; but it is a supplement. Home and school must cooperate to enrich the child's development.

During the past year:

- 21 children attended school regularly
- 3 children graduated and will attend a regular school for the blind in the fall
- 47 children were served by the staff
- 11 new referrals were made for services
- 85 home visits were made by the staff
- 315 visitors observed the activities of the children

Tribute should be paid here to the 16 volunteers who assisted the staff at Sunnybrook and with whose help the task was made a lot easier.



Playground equipment is much in demand.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND ADVANCED

Because of Delaware's relatively small population, it has been found more economical and more effective to send school-age blind children to out-of-state schools for their education, Delaware paying the respective institutions the per capita costs. In addition some young adults found suitable for further training are enrolled in specialized schools within and outside the state. Following is a tabulation:

- 6 children at Maryland School for the Blind, Baltimore, Md.
- 1 child at Royer Greaves School for the Blind, Paoli, Pa.
- 1 student at University of Pennsylvania, Phila., Pa.
- 1 student at New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, New York, N.Y.
- 1 student at Goldey Beacom School of Business, Wilmington, Del.
- 1 student at Radio Engineering Institute, Omaha, Nebraska.

RECREATION

Through the recreation program of the Commission, parties, boat rides, musicals, games, etc. are arranged for the blind of Delaware. The Commission, in cooperation with the Wilmington Lions Club, is the sponsor of the Wilmington entry in the Interstate Blind Bowler's League, which has other teams in Chester, Lansdale, Bethlehem, and Philadelphia. Games are

bowled once a week on Saturday nights, regular scores kept, and league standings maintained the same as in the American Bowling Congress. A tournament is held at the end of each season, and prizes are given for the winning team, the highest score in a single game, etc. The spirit of competition is as keen among the blind at an event of this sort as it is between the teams in a World Series.

Each year a Christmas party is held for the blind of Delaware, usually at the YMCA in Wilmington. Entertainment is provided, refreshments served, and gifts presented to each blind person who attends. Service clubs, especially the Wilmington Lions Club, cooperate with the Commission in this and a number of other recreation activities.



Scene from a busy classroom.

CAMP LANDIS

Camp Landis is a summer camp for the blind of Delaware, located near Centerville, at which any physically fit blind person is invited to spend two weeks with all expenses paid for by the Commission. During the past year 78 persons attended Camp Landis for an enjoyable two weeks, and according to some of them "had the time of our lives." This year each group was taken for a day trip to Philadelphia on the Wilson Line, having a picnic lunch on the way. The Wilmington Lions Club and a number of other civic minded groups provided entertainment for each group while it was at Camp Landis.



This group of blind ladies enjoy the recreation porch at Camp Landis.

WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER

In the workshop at the Commission during the past year, the workers participated in four sub-contracts from local industry. Two of these contracts involved the use of power equipment; one the cutting of fiber tubing, the other reborring of fiber rubber washers. One contract consisted of a fine gauging operation and a reworking of fiber bush holders. The remaining sub-contract was a rope splicing and whipping operation for army tents. One of these contracts ran for 10 weeks at which time 8 trainees and shop workers were given valuable experience in production and accuracy of work.

The Workshop also provided employment for from 3 to 9 persons at various times during the past year with chair caning, rug weaving, mat making and other crafts in addition to the above mentioned contracts.

During the past year the Delaware Commission for the Blind served as a training facility for those blind or partially seeing clients who were considered feasible for vocational rehabilitation. Courses offered were in cane travel, household mechanics, woodworking, operation of machinery and in gen-

eral craft work. 10 clients were in training during the past year. Training periods lasted from two weeks to ten months. Following is a list of trainees and the type of training received:

- 5 Sheltered Shop employees
- 5 Employed in competitive employment
- 5 Ready for competitive employment
- 1 Entered school for the blind
- 1 Moved out of state after training
- 2 Training discontinued



Busy blind workers in sub-contract department prepare advertising material for mailing.

DISPLAY ROOM

The Commission has a display room at 305 W. Eighth St., Wilmington, where the public can purchase articles made by the blind—brooms, mops, rugs, wallets, belts, and other leather articles, knitted and crocheted items, tea towels, washcloths, etc. The display room is open daily 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., Monday through Friday—closed on Saturdays and holidays. All the items sold have been made by the blind, either in their special workshops or in their own homes.



Young blind lady enjoys article in braille magazine.

LIBRARY

The Commission maintains a small braille library of braille books and magazines for borrowing by the blind of Delaware who have mastered the art of reading braille. The Talking Book Machine is also available for blind readers. It is a gramophone-like apparatus provided on allocation to all states by the Library of Congress. The states, in turn, lend these machines to blind lovers of reading. The books themselves are available through the regional district Library of Philadelphia. At the present time 95 Talking Book Machines are on loan to the blind of Delaware of which 15 were distributed during this past year.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

CLEARING HOUSE

The Commission serves as Delaware's clearing house for all matters pertaining to work for the blind. Blind people, their families or friends or groups interested in the welfare of the blind may secure through the Commission information about the work for the blind anywhere in the United States, or indeed, anywhere in the world. Also, the Commission acts as middleman in the securing for blind Delawareans of free radios, braille-transcription service, railroad and bus travel concessions, movie passes, special appliances for the blind including braille watches, braille cooking timers, etc., white canes and other devices calculated to reduce for the blind person the difficulty of living independently. A display of special appliances for the blind may be seen at the Commission headquarters.

REGISTRATION OF SOLICITORS

The Commission is given the responsibility of licensing agencies or individuals outside Delaware who wish to solicit funds for the welfare of blind people. The following Agencies have been given permits:

Blind Artists Concerts, 34 S. 17th St., Phila., Pa.

American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York

American Foundation for Overseas Blind, 22 W. 17th St., New York

Any other agency or individual soliciting funds in Delaware purportedly for the benefit of the blind is doing so in opposition to State law.

STATE USE BILL

Under provision of H B 351 passed by the last session of the Delaware State Legislature, state agencies are required to purchase goods and services from the Delaware Commission for the Blind, when such goods and services are equal in quality and price with those available through normal channels. An excellent working relationship has been established by the Commission with most State agencies.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	RECEIVED	EXPENDED
Salaries	\$ 51,500.00	\$ 51,500.00
Office Expense	1,530.00	1,530.00
Travel	4,230.00	4,230.00
Operations	13,000.00	13,000.00
Materials	9,000.00	9,000.00
Repairs and Replacements	15,400.00	15,400.00
Assistance Grants	65,000.00	65,000.00
Education	15,000.00	10,443.33
Encumbered Funds	547.22	547.22
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total State Funds	\$175,207.22	\$170,650.55

FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FUNDS

Federal Voc. Rehab. Funds	\$ 33,706.36	
Administration		\$ 4,618.14
Vocational Guidance		15,814.04
Case Service		13,274.18
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Fed. Voc. Rehab. Funds	\$ 33,706.36	\$ 33,706.36

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Federal Aid To Blind Funds	\$114,804.32	
Administration		\$ 17,740.05
Assistance		86,307.80
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Fed. Aid To Blind Funds	\$114,804.32	\$104,047.85

RECAPITULATION

	RECEIVED	EXPENDED
Total State Funds	\$175,207.22	\$170,650.55
Total Federal Voc. Rehab. Funds	33,706.36	33,706.36
Total Federal Aid to Blind Funds	\$114,804.32	\$104,047.85
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL STATE & FED. FUNDS	\$323,717.90	\$308,404.76
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

